

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 13679 281021Z
ACTION EB-08

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TAGS: BEXP, ETRD, JA
SUBJECT: TRADE FACILITATION COMMITTEE/TRADE STUDY GROUP:
AUTOMOBILES

REF: (A) TOKYO 11857, (B) TOKYO 11036

SUMMARY: REPS FROM U.S. SIDE OF TRADE STUDY GROUP (TSG)
DELEGATION ON AUTOMOBILES MET WITH MOT OFFICIALS AS FOLLOW
UP TO E/CMIN CALL ON DIRECTOR GENERAL NAKAMURA, JUNE 22, AND
TO GET U.S. AND GOJ TSG PARTICIPANTS ACQUAINTED FOR FUTURE
MEETINGS ON TSG PROBLEMS. MOT RECEPTION WAS RATHER COOL
AND AGREEMENT TO HOLD ADDITIONAL MEETINGS WAS ONLY RELUC-
TANTLY EXTRACTED FROM THEM. EMBASSY BELIEVES TSG PRESSURE
ON MOT TO CHANGE AUTO INSPECTION PROCEDURES MUST BE CARE-
FULLY MANAGED SO IT DOES NOT BECOME COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, BE-
CAUSE MOT BELIEVES IT HAS GONE OUT OF ITS WAY TO RESPOND
TO U.S. REQUESTS, MOST RECENTLY BY AGREEING TO SEND INSPEC-
TION TEAM TO U.S. IN AUGUST. END SUMMARY.

1. E/CMIN, EMBOFF, ACCJ REPRESENTATIVE, AND U.S. AUTO
MANUFACTURERS' REPRESENTATIVES MET WITH T. HIGUCHI, ASST.
CHIEF, VEHICLE MAINTENANCE SECTION, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
(MOT) AND OTHER MOT OFFICIALS, JULY 27, AS FIRST STEP TO-
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WARD INVOLVING JAPANESE SIDE IN TRADE STUDY ON U.S. AUTO-
MOBILE IMPORTS INTO JAPAN INITIATED BY U.S. REPRESENTATIVES.
ALTHOUGH EMBASSY HAD REQUESTED MEETING WITH K. NIWA, DI-
RECTOR OF MOT ENGINEERING DIVISION, WE WERE TOLD HE WAS
"BUSY" AND COULD NOT MEET WITH US.

2. E/CMIN OPENED WITH REMARKS THAT THE MEETING WAS A FOL-

LOW-UP TO THE VISIT HE PAID JUNE 22 ON DIRECTOR GENERAL NAKAMURA (REFTEL A) AND WAS REQUESTED SO THAT GOJ OFFICIALS AND U.S. AUTO INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES COULD BECOME ACQUAINTED, DISCUSS MUTUAL PROBLEMS, AND IN A FRIENDLY, INFORMAL MANNER RESOLVE ISSUES OUTLINED IN REFTELS.

3. GOJ RESPONSE WAS COURTEOUS, BUT NOT ENCOURAGING. GOJ DEL ASKED IF THE DISCUSSIONS COULD BE LIMITED TO GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT AND NOTED THAT AGREEMENTS MADE IN SEPTEMBER 1977 TO INCLUDE INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES WERE MADE BY MITI (MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY), NOT MOT. ALSO, THEY SAID, JAPAN IS SENDING A TEAM OF INSPECTORS TO THE U.S. NEXT WEEK TO TALK WITH THE INDUSTRY. THEY SAID A REPORT HAD BEEN PREPARED FOR U.S. AUTHORITIES WHICH ADDRESSES SOME OF THE ISSUES OUTLINED IN A BRIEF PREPARED BY LOCAL U.S. AUTO REPRESENTATIVES WHICH EMBASSY HAD GIVEN THE GOJ INFORMALLY JULY 21.

4. E/CMIN REPLIED USG WAS APPRECIATIVE OF EFFORTS GOJ HAD MADE TO RESOLVE AUTO INDUSTRY PROBLEMS, BUT THAT GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE ONLY PARTIALLY SATISFACTORY BECAUSE QUESTIONS ARE TECHNICAL AND REQUIRE EXPERTISE WHICH ONLY THE AUTO MANUFACTURERS CAN PROVIDE. DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE MORE PRODUCTIVE IF HELD IN LESS FORMAL AND MORE CANDID FORUM THAN GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT WOULD PERMIT, HE NOTED.

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5. GOJ DEL ASKED A FEW QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE TYPE OF ISSUES WHICH THE U.S. SIDE WOULD BE LIKELY TO PRESENT. THEN, AT U.S. URGING, THEY RATHER GRUDGINGLY AGREED TO CONSIDER CONVENING ANOTHER MEETING IN LATE SEPTEMBER (AS SUGGESTED BY U.S. SIDE) TO LISTEN TO U.S. PRESENTATION AND TO "EXPLAIN WHY WE CANNOT CHANGE OUR LAWS AND REGULATIONS."

6. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THAT PART OF MOT COOLNESS TO U.S. APPROACH ON AUTOMOBILES IS GOJ CHAGRIN THAT WE CONTINUE TO PRESS INSPECTION ISSUES ON THEM WHEN THEY FEEL THEY HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL CONCESSIONS TO U.S. IN LAST 18 MONTHS, AND MOST RECENTLY HAVE AGREED TO SEND A MISSION TO THE U.S. TO CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES OF TYPE APPROVAL AND RESOLVE OTHER PROBLEMS. THEY SEEM TO FEEL WE ARE HARASSING THEM WITHOUT WAITING FOR THE RESULTS OF INITIATIVES ALREADY IN PROGRESS. DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE AWARE THAT MOT AUTO DIVISION CONCEIVES OF ITS MISSION AS FEARLESS, HONEST ENFORCEMENT OF JAPANESE LAW AND REGULATION TOWARD ALL, JAPANESE AND FOREIGNERS. IT DOES NOT FEEL A RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GRANDER ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE. EMBASSY IS CONCERNED THAT THE WRONG KIND OF PRESSURE ON MOT AUTO DIVISION COULD BE

COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, ESPECIALLY IF SOME ISSUES OF ONLY MARGINAL VALUE TO U.S. AUTO EXPORTERS SEEM TO LOOM LARGER IN OUR CONCERNS THAN THE ISSUES THEY ARE SCHEDULED TO DISCUSS IN U.S. IN AUGUST. WE WILL TAKE A CAREFUL READING ON THE SITUATION BEFORE NEXT MEETING. MANSFIELD

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